

THE JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH

Help Us Identify and Develop the
World's Brightest Young Minds



JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER *for* TALENTED YOUTH





STUDENTS BUILD ROBOTS AND LEARN GRADUATE-LEVEL MATERIAL IN THE ADVANCED ROBOTICS CTY SUMMER COURSE.

COVER PHOTO: MARC HOWARD AND MIRIAM MELNICK, CTY ALUMNI AND GOOGLE ENGINEERS, LEAD AN ADVANCED ROBOTICS COURSE DURING THE SUMMER SESSION IN LANCASTER, PA.

IMAGE: WILL KIRK/HOMEWOODPHOTO.JHU.EDU

ADVANCED EDUCATION IS A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY, FOR HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS

Ensuring that advanced young learners receive appropriate academic challenge is crucially important to their ongoing success — and our shared future. Empowering the world’s brightest children to find their passions, discover their potential, and receive support that propels them to the highest achievement possible has been the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth’s specialty for nearly 40 years. We need these talented young people working at optimum levels for their own well-being and the common good.

Our schools cannot take on the challenge of identifying and nurturing advanced learners alone — particularly when those students come from low-income backgrounds. Too often classroom teachers lack the resources to provide

the kind of instruction these exceptional learners need to thrive. With your support, CTY can be the partner that enables our education systems to address this critical gap.

We are the oldest and most recognized university-based nonprofit dedicated to the identification and development of high-ability pre-collegiate students. CTY’s programs have reached more than 1.5 million young people worldwide since our 1979 founding by renowned Johns Hopkins psychologist Julian C. Stanley. We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but we know we can and must do much more.

With your help, we will strengthen our student financial aid, educator support, and research and advocacy work. Together, we can impact advanced learners of all backgrounds. Your gift to CTY will demonstrate your firm belief in the next generation of thinkers, doers, and dreamers.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ELAINE TUTTLE HANSEN, CTY IS STUDYING AND EVALUATING NON-TRADITIONAL WAYS TO IDENTIFY ADVANCED LEARNERS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS.



IMAGE: WILL KIRK/HOMEWOODPHOTO.JHU.EDU

Answering the next big questions in talent development

How do we better identify high-potential youth who aren’t demonstrating their academic abilities through traditional testing? CTY Executive Director Elaine Tuttle Hansen considers this question the biggest challenge facing the talent development field, and CTY, she says, is uniquely situated to answer it.

Traditional above-level testing is not an effective means to identify students from low-income families who have not had equitable learning opportunities compared to their middle- and upper-income peers. Our researchers are testing and evaluating alternative methods — observing a student’s spatial reasoning skills through block-building activities, for example — in the communities that we serve.

Our policy experts are sharing research results with lawmakers and administrators who are seeking evidence-based guidance for improving struggling public school systems across the country. And when we discover these talented students, we’re doing all we can to provide them with financial support so they can benefit from CTY programming.

“All young people deserve the opportunity to find out where their passions and talents lie, and to be supported toward their highest achievement, no matter their life circumstances,” Hansen says.

A PROVEN MODEL IN TALENT DEVELOPMENT — WITH ROOM TO GROW

OPENING OUR DOORS WIDER TO QUALIFIED STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

CTY has a robust community of alumni numbering more than 155,000 who are leaders in fields that range from science and technology to finance, law, education, and the arts. Many of these alumni received full or partial scholarship support to enroll in CTY programs. A select number of these students were chosen to enroll in CTY Scholars — a four-year college access program designed for academically advanced, low-income students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Our alumni point to their CTY experiences as pivotal to their academic, professional, and personal successes. Ilenna Jones, a 2009 alumna (see profile below), says that, before CTY, she had a “complacent frame of mind where the point of learning was just to get good grades.” A scholarship to attend two CTY summer courses “allowed me to break that mold and look at subjects in ways I didn’t expect.”

To open CTY to more low- and middle-income students, we must substantially increase our financial aid resources. We seek to raise \$10 million in philanthropic support for full and partial CTY scholarships, and for the CTY Scholars program. Your gift is crucial in helping us accelerate the continued expansion of access to CTY programs for advanced learners, regardless of their families’ economic circumstances.

ATTRACTING DYNAMIC CTY INSTRUCTORS AND INSPIRING CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Advanced learners thrive with support from excellent teachers and other top minds in a variety of fields. Each year, CTY hires more than 1,700 instructors and staff to lead its residential summer programs, in addition to year-round full- and part-time CTY Online instructors. These include exemplary teachers, graduate students, and college professors as well as accomplished professionals with expert knowledge, such as Marc Howard and Miriam Melnick, CTY alumni and Google engineers who co-teach an advanced robotics course for high-school students (see profile on page 3). These enthusiastic instructors marry our students’ innate interests to their rapidly developing abilities, modeling fascinating — and attainable — career paths.

CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH

CTY also recognizes the critical role that classroom teachers play in advanced learners’ development. Since 1988, CTY students from California and Nevada — and, in recent years, Maryland — have nominated teachers for recognition as Sarah D. Barder Fellows, a program endowed by a generous gift. Nearly a dozen teachers are selected each year to attend a CTY conference. Presentations and workshops give these teachers the opportunity to collaborate with CTY experts, fellows, and alumni, to learn about innovative ideas they can bring to their schools, and to develop relationships among peers who become a valuable network they can tap throughout their careers.

We aim to keep CTY an attractive option for more instructors like Howard and Melnick and expand professional development opportunities like the Barder Fellowship for classroom teachers, but these efforts require new resources. To this end, we seek \$1 million to launch an endowed fund that will enable CTY to recruit the highest caliber instructors and subject-area experts to lead our programs, and to create awards that recognize and develop standout teachers nationwide. With your help, we can attract, retain, and reward these exceptional individuals who nurture, inspire, and challenge CTY students.



MIRIAM MELNICK AND MARC HOWARD, CTY ALUMNI AND
SUMMER PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS



ILENNA JONES, A 2009 CTY ALUMNA

“CTY was a turning point for me”

In the past decade, Ilenna Jones has graduated from Dartmouth College, studied under the direction of a Nobel Prize winner, worked in a Johns Hopkins laboratory, and started a PhD in neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania. She hopes someday to advance treatments for neuropsychotic illnesses, such as schizophrenia. Looking back, Jones considers her CTY genetics and genomics summer courses a launching pad for that success — and knows her family’s finances nearly rendered it an impossibility.

Thanks to a full scholarship to CTY, Jones tackled challenging scientific material and became empowered by her increasing ability to grasp it. She thrived among a group of teens who, like her, sought to learn for learning’s sake. CTY sparked her hunger for that intellectually engaged community, and she’s pursued it ever since.

“CTY was a turning point for me,” Jones says. “It allowed me to turn toward the direction I’ve taken and form the goals I have now. And I’ve never taken that for granted.”

Finding inspiration by inspiring the next generation

As alumni, Marc Howard and Miriam Melnick know how transformative the CTY experience can be. That’s why the married Google engineers devote three weeks each summer to teaching Advanced Robotics, which exposes high school students to graduate-level material as they tackle emerging trends in engineering, like autonomous navigation and computer vision.

“They can directly apply what they learn in the workforce or in an academic setting,” Howard says. “They learn that engineering isn’t magic; it’s a great tool they can keep in their belts.”

Google allows Howard and Melnick to engage in activities like teaching at CTY, but not all employers offer such options.

We must provide stipends respectful of these working professionals’ time — often unpaid — out of the office. These individuals, especially those from underrepresented groups, such as women in computer science, can deeply affect CTY students.

“Our female students are gobsmacked that there’s a woman, an engineer at Google, at the front of the class, encouraging them to follow in her footsteps,” Melnick says. “We can make a huge impact when we inspire students in that way — and funding is important in making that happen.”



IMAGE: JIM BURGER/HOMEWOODPHOTO.JHU.EDU

JONATHAN PLUCKER, STANDING CENTER, WORKS WITH INCOMING HOPKINS EDUCATION DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Making an impact through policy advocacy

When the U.S. Department of Education issued new guidelines about gifted education in April 2016, a question arose: What percentage of American students are actually capable of working above their grade level?

Within two months, Julian C. Stanley Professor of Talent Development Jonathan Plucker and his colleagues had completed a study and a policy brief finding that up to 40 percent of elementary and middle school students perform at least one grade level above their current grade in reading and up to 30 percent in math. If so many students were already ahead of grade-based benchmarks, the researchers argued, then

policymakers need to rethink the current age-based, grade-level paradigm. Plucker immediately received invitations to speak with state policymakers to determine how their regulations could be amended to ensure resources aren't wasted teaching students information they already know. These kinds of "rapid response" projects arise often, Plucker says, and CTY's international network of contacts gives the center an advantage in pursuing them. The missing link? Increased funding for research costs.

"Through policy advocacy, we can make a disproportionately big impact," Plucker says, "and philanthropic support makes a very big difference. There's a lot of bang for the buck in this area."

SHARING OUR EXPERTISE WITH EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

In the four decades since our founding, CTY has become the foremost authority on characteristics of advanced learners and interventions that can cultivate their potential. But many critical questions remain about the identification and optimal development of exceptional academic talent.

Experts like Amy Shelton, director of research for CTY and associate dean of research in the School of Education, are applying the lessons of cognitive psychology and neuroscience to explore spatial skills as fundamental learning tools and to develop alternative methods beyond standardized testing to identify young students with high potential, especially those from under-resourced backgrounds. Renowned creativity and human intelligence scholar Jonathan Plucker, who holds appointments at CTY and the School of Education, has raised CTY's profile in the national discussion about not only gifted education but also education policy more broadly (see profile at left).

Because CTY operates outside of the structures and restrictions of public education systems, we have a tremendous opportunity to build on this foundation of innovative research, test ideas, and hone practices that school systems cannot pursue on their own. We can then share these evidence-based recommendations with policymakers, administrators, and teachers, impacting a student population far beyond those we reach directly through our programs.

To do this, we seek \$7 million to advance CTY's research and advocacy programs, and create an engine for educational change, including:

- \$6 million to endow two professorships for scholars focused on the basic science of learning that underlies academic talent development
- \$1 million to create an endowment to support faculty and staff conducting innovative research and their travel to present their findings at conferences, in meetings with lawmakers, and more

With your support, CTY's research and advocacy efforts will make a tangible difference in the lives of young learners nationwide — perhaps in your own community.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

CTY cannot succeed in achieving these critical priorities without the generous support of dedicated individuals and organizations firmly committed to serving academically advanced students, their families, and their teachers. Gifts at every level are needed, and opportunities include:

- \$5,000 – To support one CTY teaching award for one year
- \$25,000 – To support one CTY Scholar for four years
- \$100,000 – To endow one full summer program scholarship OR two online scholarships annually
- \$1 million – To endow a CTY annual symposium
- \$3 million – To endow one research professorship

We welcome the opportunity to explore these and other giving options with you. We will work with you to plan and structure your gift in ways that support your goals and ours. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your interest.

MAKE A GIFT

To learn more and to discuss your gift, please contact:

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IMAGE: CHRISTOPHER MYERS

CTY'S COURSE, FOUNDATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY, ALLOWS STUDENTS THE CHANCE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE, LEARN NEW THINGS, AND OPEN THEIR EYES TO SEEING THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY IN A CLASSROOM FILLED WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.



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